

Red Cross Alert: Scam targets military spouses

From the American Red Cross

The American Red Cross has learned about a new scam targeting military families. This scam takes the form of false information being told to military families as described below:

The caller (young-sounding, American accent) calls a military spouse and identifies herself as a representative from the Red Cross. The caller states that the spouse's husband (not identified by name) was hurt while on duty in Iraq and was med-evacuated to a hospital in Germany. The caller states they couldn't start treatment until paperwork was accomplished, and that in order to start the paperwork they needed the spouse to verify her husband's social security number and date of birth. In this case, the spouse was quick to catch on and she did not provide any information to the caller.

American Red Cross representatives typically do not contact military members/dependents directly and almost always go through a commander or first sergeant channels. Military family members are urged not to give out any personal information over the phone if contacted by unknown/unverified individuals, to include confirmation that your spouse is deployed.

In addition, American Red Cross representatives will contact military members/dependents directly only in response to an emergency message initiated by your family. The Red Cross does not report any type of casualty information to family members. The Department of Defense will contact families directly if their military member has been injured. Should any military family member receive such a call, they are urged to report it to their local Family Readiness Group or Military Personnel Flight.

The American Red Cross ensures that the American people are in touch with their family members serving in the United States military by operating a communications network that is open 24-hours, 7 days a week, 365 days-a-year.

The ingredients for career success

experts weigh in about becoming a better Sailor

By MC2 Kimberly Williams, Public Affairs Office

It is not uncommon for people to spend a reasonable portion of their time thinking about how to have a successful career. There are several tools and competencies that play an integral role in the career development process.

Ambition, motivation and self-awareness are imperative to effectively managing a military career. With the implementation of higher education standards for advancement and new criteria for 'Staying Navy', Sailors face the task of not only performing their assigned duties, but also being better than 'average'.

First-term Sailors face an additional test; they must be entered into the Navy's Perform to Serve Program (PTS), which is a quality screening process of a Sailor within 12 months of his EAOS. A board of evaluators uses this program to determine if the Sailor is retainable.

"The number one thing that the PTS board looks at are evaluations and the second thing is your paygrade. If you have two 'EP' evals and you're an E-5 on your first term, you will probably get in there [be retained by your rate]," said Chief Navy Career Counselor (SW) Jon Monteleone, NAVSTA command career counselor, "If you're an E-3 and have a 'P' or 'MP' eval, you will probably be looked over. Sailors can go to their leading petty officer, chief, division officer, and of course their career counselor, to obtain help with developing their careers," added the veteran career counselor of ten years.

Monteleone is also quick to point out that Sailors should pick up additional responsibilities, or collateral duties, to supplement their everyday assigned tasks.

"The key thing that Sailors should focus on is sailorization – the rounding of Sailors. You must get on board with command and community service, volunteer work, education and investing money

wisely, this way if you do stay in or get out, you will advance and be successful," Monteleone added.

Local Sailors are currently using the tools available to enhance their careers and personal lives. The NAVSTA 2006 Junior Sailor of the Year offers a few tips and insight into what jumpstarted his Navy career.

"Anything I do, I do it the very best I can. It's important to build yourself with general education and to learn your job! Throughout my Navy career, I have had several collateral duties including SAVI representative, evidence custodian, command investigator, and many others," said Master at Arms 2nd Class James Isabella, NAVSTA training petty officer, "Education is very important. I took advantage of tuition assistance and have taken a class at Columbia College every session since 2005. I also earned my instructor NEC," said Isabella.

The Fleet and Family Support Center has programs to help Sailors determine their strengths and weaknesses and what skillsets they possess. Experienced employees can help servicemembers make good decisions regarding their careers and personal lives.

"It's all about marketability. Servicemembers must take a close look at themselves. Don't just stick in your rating. Take some of the professional development courses that the Navy offers and seek outside education," said Ron Lancaster, transition assistance/family life specialist. "Don't just be a solid eight when you can be a 10. Expand upon your current skillset with additional training," he added.

To find out more about the career development programs the Navy offers, contact your command career counselor or visit www.nko.navy.mil.